

Shochiku  
Gaiyo Theatre  
December 26)

AKOYA

67

F

AKOYA; Or, Ordeal by "Koto".

(One Act)

(Scene of Akoya's Ordeal by "Koto".)

*Scene of playing Instruments*

Leaburk-play

*Not seen*

Dramatis Personae.

Chichibu Shoji Jiro Shigetada.

Iwanaga Sayemon Munetsura.

Hanzawa Rokuro Narikiyo.

Akoya, the Courtesan.

A large number of retainers.

A large crowd of "Takeda-yakko".

Four lookers-after.

The Takemoto Musical Band.

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At the rear of the stage, the inside of the Magistrate's Office, a range of a number of rooms all thrown open to view, properly furnished and decorated as according to the style and fashion historically supposed to be in vogue during the Kamakura Shogunate days, is duly presented to the audience's eyes. With the sound of the "taiko" announcing the time; the curtain slowly rises. Then, the samisen orchestra begins to play, accompanied by the recitation of the "Joruri".



(Recitation)

(In the midst of the recital, the chief hero of the story, Chichibu Shigetada, suitably attired in the garment worthy of his office and dignity, comes out of the inner chamber, with a deliberate and measured step, and seats himself at the appointed spot.)

Iwanaga Sayemon Munetsura, sitting here at my side, continuing to stay at the Metropolis, after the business was over of the collection of pious contributions towards the funds for the erection of the great Todaiji temple, at Nara, seeks, in the capacity of an assistant Shigetada, for information as to the whereabouts of Akushichi Byoye Kagekiyo. Wickedness and cunning incarnate, with the exterior of loyalty and faithfulness! But at heart there lurks a blackdyed duplicity, seeking to wreak own private vengeance; a wily, sly fox of a detestable fellow, encircled by the glowing halo of power and influence of his great Lord and Master, has made his apparition in the middle of the Metropolis.

(Iwanaga Sayemon emerges from out the paper screen at the upper end of the stage, and sits down on the upper hand of Shigetada.)

(Recital) At this instant, a retainer of Chichibu, Hanzawa Rokuro Narikiyo, returns from the Rokuhara Office, as now the time appointed for the "musical ordeal" of Akoya, the Courtesan, is nearing.



(From out of the further end of the stage, Hanzawa Rokuro, dressed in the garment proper to his role, makes his appearance, "jutte" in hand the necessary badge of office of the Magistrate's assistant, and at once steps forwards into the middle of the main stage.)

Roku. Ha, my Lord and Master, Akoya, the Courtesan has been brought hither, by your august order.

Shige. Take her hither before my presence.

Roku. Yes, my Lord, ha!

(Looking towards the other side)

Take hither Akoya, the Courtesan, man!

(Cries ~~Roku~~ within the draperies)

4 constables. Ha-ha-a! Yes, we hear.

(Recital) There set they down in front of the Gate the rough portable cage imprisoning Akoya. Raising the bamboo curtain, they call forth the woman from the portable prison.

Cons. Step forth quick and brisk, woman!

(Recital) d in the gorgeous attire proper to a Courtesan, but strictly bound hand and foot, as she is a prisoner. Her robe is all richly embroidered with silken threads of varied tints and hues, charming to the eye, and she manages to handle the flowing folds of the raiment with skillful cleverness and graceful adroitness. Within the breast, there were seething indefinable sentiments and inexpressible feelings. Outwardly very showy and ostentatious, but inwardly oppressed by heavy weight of anxiety and worry.



Courtesan Akoya, surrounded by 4 constable's assistants on all sides, appears on the stage in the apparel suitable to her profession.)

Cons. Step brisk and steady, Woman!

(Recital) She looks like unto a richly gorgeous peony flower stuck in a vase, drooping and spiritless, however.

(The 4 constable's assistants squat down at their several appointed places)

( (Hanzawa Rokuro, facing towards the presence of Lord Hatakeyama,)

Roku. In compliance with your special permission and by your order I released her from the disgrace and pain of the cruel chains, and interrogated her by all means in my power as to the whereabouts of her lover, although I did not fail to show her all leniency and mercy that is permissible. However, she has remained till now so obstinately silent about them, insisting that she is ignorant and knows nothing about it. No means being left now, I've been obliged to take her hither.

(Recital) In the middle of the deposition, Iwanaga

Sayemon. Ya! You have been remiss in the proper discharge of your duties: you have neglected to put the fair prisoner in irons; moreover she does not seem to show any traces of the ordeal and torture she ought to have been put. Eh - i, I now understand and can see. You were, weren't you, very lenient, nay, lukewarm even in your ordeal to-day. But to-morrow it'll be my own turn with the instrument of torture. The things can no longer be left to the



freaks and whims of my retainers. See what I'll do with that there obstinate wench, so that I will be able to wrench from hard lips the straight confession as to the hiding place of her warrior-lover. Here man! Drag that woman to Iwanaga's mansion at once. Be quick!

(Proper gestures)

(Shigetada expostulates with Iwanaga, as he is well cognizant of the latter's hastiness and imprudence, which is usual with him.)

Shige. Nay, wait a moment, Iwanaga. It was not ~~at all~~ at all at Hanzawa's unwarranted piece of private disreccion that Akoya was unfettered and unchained, and not put to the rigors of ordeal and to nature; but is entirely at my own that she was so. Moreover, till the even of this day, she is all entrusted to Shigetada's hands, and so you'll have nothing to do with her. Don't be officious, please refrain from all meddling in other's business. Sweep before your ~~own~~ doors. Say, Akoya; they say you still persist in being stiff and obstinate in the matter. Indeed, you're too stubborn and pertinacious. Why won't you confess at once, if only to save us trouble and pains. However, I never think it unnatural and unreasonable after all. It is customary in the world of you courtesans to set up the walls of humane consideration and humanly tender feelings. So, it is only natural that she has been persistently obdurate in the refusal of confession; for, as you know, Kagekiyo is her sworn sweetheart for whom she has been

willing to go even through fire and water. Understand this point well and deeply. We make her to understand this point well and deeply. We make her to undergo rigorous examination, because we know well enough that she is privy to the whereabouts of her lover. If you will confess straight and meekly, you will, sure enough, set at rest the troubled mind of our great Lord of Kamakura, and so, in consequence, you will indirectly render a signal service and a highly meritorious deed for the sake of the Shogun of Kamakura.

Even though you may invite upon yourself general people's censure and strictures, yet if it will soothe and ease the Master's anxious mind, it will be a great honor to you and be likely to contribute to your future happiness and good fortune. Consider my advice and reasonings well, and let me be glad at heart by having you break the secret as to the place of hiding of Kagekiyo.

(Thus expostulated and remonstrated so tenderly and mercifully, Akoya, notwithstanding, still remains obstinate and obdurate in her resolve not to divulge the secret demanded. Hearing these words of Shigetada, full of reason, yet rigorous and strict, Akoya wonders at heart how dogged and unrelenting the Lord Hatakeyama is.)

Akoya. I have long heard people rumor of you Lord Hatakeyama that you're a man of profound wisdom and deeply informed about the things of the world. But alas, till to-day I have been thinking of you, to tell truth, quite contemptuously and too lightly. However, my contempt and detestation towards you, my Lord, has now fairly evaporated. Indeed, to-day's advice of you for myself has really disarmed me of my



dogged obstinacy, and I'm truly thankful to you for your kindly and sympathetic words, which were spoken by you out of your considerate sympathy for a poor courtesan that I am. Yes, yes, my venerable Lord, if I really know the whereabouts of Kagekiyo, I would only be glad to let you have it at once, of course.

But really, noble Sir, I do not know it, never, however much

and persistently you may interrogate me on the point. If,

thus, the clouds of doubts and suspicions won't clear up from off me, well, I'll, till the end of my days, .....

(be ready and prepared to be subjected to tortures and

ordeals, which would be willingly borne as the substitute for

the inhumanly hard service I'm exacted in the gay quarters

whose butterfly denizen I am. To put forth your utmost

in practising tortures and ordeals upon may be your proper

duty to your Master. So, do your most and your best in

staking and screwing a mere weak woman like me. There's no

two characters for the word "tsutome" (service, - Akoya's

service is done in the gay world of danceuses heitairas,

while that of Shigetada consists in the faithful performance

of his duties for the Shogun Lord of Kamakura). Alas, such

is the actual condition of the "floating" world.)

(Hearing these words, Iwanaga's stock of patience is now

well-nigh exhausted. No longer able to contain himself,

Iwanaga bursts out into angry ejaculation:-) Woman, you

corrupt bones, how dare you to prattle and tattle in such a

manner, in spite of the august presence of our noble Lord

Magistrate. If you, ugly wench, dare continue to refuse

confession, I have means wherewithal I shall be able to

squeeze out of you sordid bag of wrinkled rags and tatters,

the whole secret we require. You shall smart for your dogged

obduracy; you shall learn the lesson; you shall repent of it



too late. Wait and see, wench. Thus threatened and intimidated,)

Akoya. Ho, ho, ho! I'm, my Lord, too old and experienced to have any fear of your hollow, empty words of threat; for I've too long lived in the eddies and vortices of the world of gay fashions and the Land of enticing Sirens. You Iwanage-dono, who is alike present at this place of the Magistrate's Office, wearing a face of a full Lord like others, - you're Iwanaga-dono, belongs to an entirely different species: you may be a blackest piece of carbon, while that Lord is white like to pure snow. By the express order of Lord Hatakeyama, as it was said, the way of interrogation Hanzawa-dono adopted to-day, - I wholly free from the indignity of shackles and fetters, and also from the distresses of the screws and the stakes, - was truly lenient and genuinely humane. Taking me gently and courteously in the breezy, cool shades of the pine groves of Rokuhara, and showing me many a kindness marked by high humanity and mercy, and consideration unspeakable, then at last he softly, and politely even, proceeded to the business, asking me as to the secret, as he said, whereabouts of Kagekiyo.

(When I was asked by the Lord, I found myself in a situation that was, in fact, ever harder to bear and endure than the pains of the grim instruments torture, because the words of mercy and sympathy are really penetrating even to the core of the heart and to the marrow of the bones.

Subjected even to such unbearable "torture of mercy", I could not but say that I'm entirely ignorant and innocent



in the matter; for real ignorance can now be turned into knowledge. If further pursued and pressed, I would rather prefer death at his hand than a life of still unendurable sufferings. She appears to be absolutely prepared for anything.)

( Apparently, nothing could be made of the stubborn woman, so resolutely determined.

Shigetada, calling Hanzawa to himself, turned to him, evidently full of thoughts and feelings.)

Shige. Despite all my efforts, the secret can never be obtained. Now, we have come to the end of our resources, and we are compelled, under the circumstances, to have recourse to the torture and ordeal in my very presence. (This is the stern command of Shigetada.)

Rokuo Ha! Yes, my Lord.

(Recital) (With the utterance of the word of assent "H!", Rokuo leaves the place.)

(Hanzawa disappears in the lower end of the stage)

(Recital) (Following the words of his Lord, Iwanaga Sayemon: 'Ya-ya! Fellows! Prepare for the torture of water, to which that stiff-necked wench is to be subjected now'. At these words, some confusion and stir is caused in the court-yard, the people hurrying the preparations of the torture intended for Akeya. The sound of drawing water from the well keenly goes to the centre of the listeners' hearts. Akeya seems now wholly prepared for the worst things to come.)



(The while, there appear from the lower end of the stage a multitude of "takeda-yakko" (the jailers' assistants), with the grim paraphernalias necessary for the performance of their required duty. They set themselves down on either side of the poor Akoya.)

Shige. How boisterous and noisy, fellows! Be clam and quiet, man.

(Thereupon, these lowly people return to their original place.)

The tools and instruments for executing the torture of Akoya have I already prepared for use. Bring them here, man!

(Recital) (By the Lord's command, those grim implements of Hell are all brought out into the view of all people present. What's this? They are not either the racks or the screws, but they are in the shape of the "koto"

(Japanese harp), the ~~ramisen~~, and the "kokyu" (Japanese violin). These diverse instruments of music, likely to fill the whole court-yard with their charming melodies, are duly set before Akoya.)

(Then, four warrior pages step forwards, attired in the regular "haori" "hakama", put the "koto" in front of Akoya, while the other two musical instruments are placed at the lower place)

(Recital) (Iwanaga feels an involuntary start at this sight; he intently gazes at the faces of the people in silence, in seeming expectation of something to turn up.



Shige. Woman, I say, play on that "koto" there. I, Shigetada, will here listen to the sound you may produce from that harp.

~~22~~(Standing his long sword erect and leaning his chin on the top of the Weapon's haft)

You'll, too, listen, Iwanaga-dono.

(Recital) (These words are spoken obviously in a tone marked by unreserve and friendly feelings. Expecting to see the fearful tools of torture before her, she is all at a loss to see what all this really means. Ah, now I see perfectly, my Lord intends, under the pretext of fortune is going to beguile his leisure and regale himself with the dulcet melodies flowing out of these several instruments of music. The alluring melodies of the "koto" and the samisen filling the court-yard, the place of stern examination of crimes and grim pronouncement of judgment, - really such a thing has never been heard of since the remotest time of Jimmu Tenno. Heaven has no mouth to utter its will and intention; it speaks its decrees and commands through the mouth of an. I now see perfectly.

Shige. Say, Akoya, why don't you begin quick. You won't play on the "koto", won't you? Is it because you've now made up your mind to divulge the secret as to the whereabouts of Kagekiyo?

(Recital) (Shigetada addresses these words to Akoya, as he sees her apparently in hesitancy with the "koto" before her. But the real will and intention of Shigetada is not clearly known. Akoya being obliged to do so, at last put her fine slender fingers upon the thirteen strings of the instrument and sweep them along these strings harboring melodies charming. Thinking about her dear sweetheart "in longings



immortal", her heart and mind is disturbed and in confusion inexpressible, while her voice of singing is hoarse and dull, so that the "koto" refuses to produce the melodies expected.)

(Akoya drawing the "koto" near to her,)

(Recital) (Kage (shadow), it bears affinity to the moon, Kiyoshi (clear) it too bears the same affinity:

But kage and kiyoshi are empty things, They do not reflect their images On my tear-stained sleeves.)

(Shigetada listening to the recital of this short poem by Akoya. ....)

(Akoya, meanwhile, finishes playing on the "koto".)

Shige. The short poem you've just recited apparently hints at the actual situation in which you find yourself, and at the ignorance of the whereabouts of Kagekiyo. If you say that you don't know it, let it be as it is. But I should like to know when and by what chance you two did come to become acquainted for the first time.

Akoya. Oh, how strange an interrogation, this! It's an old, old story; I feel a shame to have to tell you of it.

(Recital) (In the hey-day of the Heike clan, and in the delicious season of the Springtide, it was that he made a daily pilgrimage to the Shrine of the God of Iwashimizu, by traversing the long, long way from the Province of Owari, up hill and down dale. Taking the going and back, too, ascending and descending Gojo slope. In time, we came to exchange glances and smiles, till at



last we became intimately acquainted and bound in ties firm and indissoluble, I showing him diverse kindnesses conceived in pure affection and he requiting me with the same affection inspired by love ardent and unalloyed. We went on deeper and deeper in the mazes of blind Love, enraptured and enchained by little Cupid. Thus, we passed our days, oblivious to all things passing around us. In the Autumn of the Era of Juyei, when already there was stirring the autumnal wind chilly and dreary, the leaves of the trees were whirling and wheeling in the desolating gusts, my dear man, taking leave of me in spite of ourselves, started on his journey into the West, by the exigencies of the fates which would follow the warriors. That's the last end of our relations sprouting from the seeds of accidental love and affection. How sad, and how sorrowful, only to think of it!

Shige. Really, certainly. Only natural! Such is the way of Love, which is never without rubs and which never runs smoothly. However, our examination is not yet at an end. This time I command you to play the samisen.

Akeya. Ya.

Shige. Nay, as long as I've not heard all that I want to hear from never let you be free.

(Recital) (Thus, Akeya was compelled to play the samisen, as he wanted to have her obey his order.

She does not know will become of all this, but, once resolved and determined to seal her mouth hermetically,



however often and however rigorously she may be interrogated, - all this out of her genuine love and unchangeable affection for her dear sweetheart, Kagekiyo. Akoya will show her skill with the samisen.

(Akoya takes up the instrument in her hands. From the lower end is heard the sing of the song accompanying the playing on the samisen. The two persons appear)

(Recital, accompanied by the samisen strains)

(Conjugal bliss, surrounded by draperies of brocades heavy and gorgeous, - a pair of human mandarin ducks, inseparable and inseparated, - eternally mated and paired. How many a night did they pass in dreamless slumber in the beds of down upon which the angels of Love smile. Be that as it may, however, my husband left word he would surely come to roost in her warm bosom before autumn visits here again with the comfortless chill winds. Alas, alas, the word has proved false and hollow: he has not come back yet, nor is there any man to inquire after him.

(The singing is finished in an adequate manner)

Shige. Enough, enough. Cease playing the samisen now!

~~XX~~ (The samisen is carried away)

(Recital) (A mad woman's plaintive complaint about the dreary solitude in her conugal chamber! At times, it may stimulate our interest. But the pretext won't be heard of, it won't do, it will never do. Say, this time play the "kokyu". Be quick!



Akoya. Aye, aye.

(Recital) (Answering "Aye, aye", Akoya addresses herself to the performance with that stringed instrument, - with a ~~an~~ heart tense and earnest. When the song she sings stirs and rouses, in the hearts of the listeners, a sense of pathos and sympathetic sorrow, the tunes grow right and harmonious) (She now vigorously manages the bow, bringing out from the slender strings sweetly shrill sounds which straightway goes into the core of the heart.

(Recital continued) The Spring flowers of Yashino hills and the gorgeous autumnal tints of Tatsuta, the mellow moonbeams of Sarashina and the silverwhite snows of Koshiji, - all have passed away like an empty dream, leaving traces behind, and when we awaken, we find nothing to meet our eye. The dews of Adashi plain and the smokes curling up from the plain of Toribeno, are ceaseless and constant. This is the way of the world; such is the truth of the "floating" world.)

(The playing on the "kokyu" is finished)

(Recital continued) (The tune of the "kokyu", so full of truth and reality, makes Shigetada greatly moved by the deeply stirred sentiments within his inmost heart.)

Shige. With this, the intended torture and ordeal of Akoya shall come to an end. I'm now perfectly satisfied ~~at~~ her word that she does not really know the whereabouts of Kagekiyo; she does not tell a lie, it is the fact and truth admitting of no shadow of suspicion. She is now perfectly free from all interference on our part.



(Recital) (At these gracious words of Shigetada, Akoya collapsed under the weight of unspeakable gratitude and thankfulness towards Shigetada, shedding tears prompted by the deep sense of the humane mercy and tender sympathy shown her by that gentle Lord. Akoya worshipped Shigetada with both her hands piously clasped. On the other hand, Iwanaga, now all crest-fallen and chap-fallen, shamefaced and shameful, sneaks away on his way, all wind being taken away from his once full swollen sails.)

(Gestures of boundless joy by Akoya; Iwanaga almost falls down faint and swooning, whom Shigetada tries to support. The lusty clappings with the wooden knockers, and upon the scene falls.

The Curtain.